

Commemorating Human Rights

by Stephanie Woodard

The month of June marks the observation of three very special days in which the international community recognizes refugees, the preservation of human rights, and the fight against illegal drugs and trafficking. These days are World Refugee Day celebrated on June 20, International Day in Support of Victims of Torture on June 26, and International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking also on June 26. On World Refugee Day, the United States, along with the international community, salutes the fortitude of the world's refugees and internally displaced persons. Around the world today, millions of people endure war, genocide, famine and natural disasters. Often, they are forced to flee in search of safety, seeking temporary shelter until they can return home and rebuild their lives. Currently, there are 34 million refugees and internally displaced persons who are some of the world's most vulnerable people. On World Refugee Day, we remember not only what they have survived, but the strength and spirit with which they've survived it. The United States is committed to supporting refugees and displaced people worldwide. We are proud to support the heroic efforts of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees, the Red Cross, the International Organization of Migration, and many other nongovernmental organizations that work on behalf of refugees worldwide.

On June 26, the international community reaffirms its commitment to the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking. There are 2.4 million people who were trafficked into forced labor. Of these, worldwide 600,000 to 800,000 are trafficked across borders each year (UN 2010). The United States and UN member countries stand together to achieve a drug free society. UN Conventions, such as the 1988 United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, have established a reputable worldwide drug control system, thus enforcing the international eradication of drug abuse and illicit trafficking. Although these positive steps are pervasive, illicit drugs continue

to pose a health danger to humanity. That is why drugs are, and should remain, controlled. The United States joins the UN General Assembly in recognizing that the world drug problem continues to constitute a serious threat to public health, the safety and well-being of humanity, and young people. It also contributes to socioeconomic and political stability and sustainable development.

June 26 is also the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture. On this day, the U.S. and UN member states underline the importance of the global eradication of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatments, and to the full rehabilitation of torture victims. Scrutiny and openness are essential factors in combating torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Recalling Resolution

"Drug abuse poses significant health challenges ... Drugs are a threat to the environment ... The illicit drug trade also undermines governance, institutions and societal cohesion ... To break this vicious circle, it is essential to promote development in drug-growing regions. Our work to achieve the MDGs and fight drugs must go hand-in-hand. In seeking to eradicate illicit crops, we must also work to wipe out poverty."

*Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon
Message for the International Day Against
Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking
26 June 2010*

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An Indian Muslim girl participates in a signature campaign demanding the abolition of the death penalty in Hyderabad, on December 10, 2006. The event was organized by the Civil Liberties Monitoring Committee India (CLMCI) to mark International Human Rights Day.

The American Center

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H O L I D A Y S

NONE

A WORD FROM THE CENTER

June is a month of change. In the United States, the academic year finishes, and students go on their summer holiday; some graduate and get ready either for their next level of education or begin the search for a job to launch a career. In America, it is also the month known for weddings, one of life's biggest changes. In Mumbai, June marks the time when we all welcome the rains of the monsoon, which replenish the water supply and refresh us after the heat of May. The first rain brings celebration, with dancing in the streets.

June is also a month for change. In support of human rights, this month we recognize that we still need to promote positive change in the world: work towards ensuring that all refugees and internally displaced persons will go home; we still need to fight the scourges of torture, drug abuse and the illicit drug trade. At times, these problems may seem insurmountable, but when countries like the U.S. and India stand strong and work against them, individually, bilaterally, and multilaterally, through the United Nations, positive change will come.

Change, even change for the good, can be scary. It can make us uneasy and anxious. The status quo is comfortable and known, anything new can seem uncomfortable and unknown. We've been announcing for several months now that this bulletin will change by going fully electronic. And now the moment has come. This is the final Mumbai American Center bulletin that will appear in this print version. We know that some of you are worried, but we are confident that as you become comfortable in time with the electronic version, you will come to enjoy the new as much as you have the old.

"For time and the world do not stand still. Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future." *John F. Kennedy*

Please make sure we have your correct e-mail address so that you can continue to change with us.



Anne E. Grimes
Public Affairs Officer

(Continued from page 1)

62/148 adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 18, 2007, and Resolution HRC/8/L.9 adopted by the UN Human Rights Council on June 18, 2008, the United States recognizes this day as a recommitment to the condemnation of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. These days of observance encourage us to recognize that although measures have been taken to curb these unfortunate occurrences, the fight against torture and inhuman treatment should remain fuelled and in the vanguard.

Stephanie Woodard works at the U.S. Consulate General, Mumbai

NOTES FROM THE AMERICAN LIBRARY

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Human Rights, the U.S. and the World

Discussion led by Steven Fox

Monday, June 20
American Center Auditorium

6:00 p.m.

This talk will discuss human rights as an ideal that emerged from both the French and American Revolutions. We will consider how it spread globally, and how the concept of human rights has grown in the last 50 years. We will also consider the difference between civil rights and human rights.

Steven Fox is a U.S. Foreign Service Officer with a longstanding interest in human rights. He has been active in civil and human rights issues since 1980 when he was a young student organizer. Mr. Fox will discuss how ideas about human rights emerged and spread, how they came to define the U.S. as they spread globally after World War II. Mr. Fox has frequently spoken at the American Center, and this will be his last talk before departing India for his next assignment.

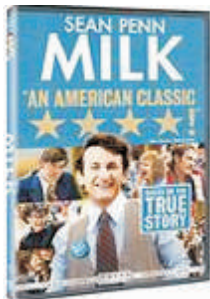
American Center Auditorium
3:30 and 6:30 p.m.

Friday, June 10

Milk

(2008, 129 mins)

San Francisco supervisor Harvey Milk (Sean Penn), the first openly gay man elected to major public office, becomes an activist icon in the city's Castro District on the cusp of a new civil rights movement in the 1970s, clashing with colleague Dan White (Josh Brolin), who would go on to assassinate Milk and Mayor George Moscone in 1978.



Friday, June 24

Dead Man Walking

(1995, 122 mins)

Forceful, true-life drama starring Susan Sarandon as Sister Helen Prejean, a progressive Louisiana nun who decides to serve as spiritual advisor to convicted racist murderer Matthew Poncelet (Sean Penn) before he is executed by lethal injection. Robert Prosky and Raymond J. Barry also star.



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A Retrospective of Elizabeth Taylor Films

Saturdays - 2.30 p.m.

June 4

Cat on a Hot Tin Roof (1958, 104 mins)

A story of deception which is destroying a patriarchal Southern family as its members gather for the imminent demise of their "Big Daddy."

June 11

Who is Afraid of Virginia Woolf?
(1966, 131 mins)

An evening with George and Martha (Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton) becomes a searing event of vicious verbal backbiting, disclosed secrets, alcoholic indulgence and bizarre fantasies in this faithful adaptation of Edward Albee's Broadway play.

June 18

Butterfield 8 (1960, 109 mins)

Elizabeth Taylor garnered her first Academy Award for playing a model/call girl who wants to escape her sordid life in this lush melodrama. Laurence Harvey, Dina Merrill, Mildred Dunnock, and Eddie Fisher costar.

June 25

Giant (1956, 210 mins)

Drama of two generations of a wealthy Texas cattle clan, with Rock Hudson as the headstrong family head, Elizabeth Taylor as his wife, and James Dean (in his final film) as the ranch hand in love with Taylor.

July 2

National Velvet (1944, 124 mins)

Classic family film about Velvet (Elizabeth Taylor), her beloved horse, and her determination to win the Grand National Steeplechase race.

Admission to American Center programs, restricted to persons over 14, unless otherwise specified, is on a first-come, first-served basis. The auditorium doors will open 30 minutes before the start of the program.



Announcement!

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We look forward to hearing from you!

